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Abstract: Ermentrude's consecration in 866 has long been interpreted as the quintessential example of queen-making as fertility rite. More recent scholarship has illuminated how Carolingian queen-making reflected richer definitions of queenship and wider political roles of queens. This article re-examines the significance of fertility at Ermentrude's consecration against the backdrop of the 860s. Close analysis of the surviving introductory address as well as the liturgy for anointing and coronation reveals that fertility was an unusually important theme at Ermentrude's consecration - but not simply the queen's fertility. By modelling royal fertility on biblical templates, the consecration not only communicated hopes of future children but also political messages about divine sanction of dynastic continuity and good kingship.

The lavishly illuminated Bible of San Paolo fuori le mura contains a famous portrait of a ruler holding court. This is the 'face that launches a thousand textbooks on medieval history'.¹ Many of the portrait's details are recognisable from the visual repertoire of ninth-century royal iconography. But one detail is more unusual. The veiled figure to the ruler's left, larger than all other figures except the enthroned king, is a rare depiction of a Carolingian queen.² A clue to the identity of the royal couple appears in the opening lines to the verse dedication below the image. The Bible had been produced for a king Charles. But for which Charles? When Ernst Kantorowicz tackled this question in a classic essay back in 1955, conventional dating placed the Bible somewhere between the 860s and 880s. This left two possibilities: Charles the Bald or Charles the Fat. The final lines of the dedication looked more decisive because they expressed hopes for future children: 'Beautifying as usual is the noble consort on the left, / By whom may distinguished offspring duly be given (*paretur*) to the realm'.³

It is not often that arguments turn on subjunctive verbs. But this particular subjunctive (*paretur*) inclined scholars to conclude that the couple must have been

childless. Only one option fitted the bill. Whereas Charles the Bald's two marriages to Ermentrude and Richildis produced a dozen or more sons and daughters, the marriage of Charles the Fat and Richardis was one of several later ninth-century royal unions that failed to produce any children.⁴ Kantorowicz, however, unravelled the assumption that only childless rulers had reasons to welcome pleas and prayers for fertility. He argued that the Bible ought to be associated with Charles the Bald on several grounds, including liturgical and diplomatic evidence of Charles's preoccupation with the 'thought of additional descendants' in the 860s and 870s.⁵ Association of the Bible with Charles the Bald has since stuck while uncertainties linger over the queen's identity, though Richildis tends to be preferred over Ermentrude.⁶ Kantorowicz's essay is a primer in what could be termed the grammar of Carolingian fertility. The first grammatical rule? Childless kings and queens did not have a monopoly on those subjunctives.

This article re-examines one of Kantorowicz's key pieces of evidence. On 25th August 866 Ermentrude, Charles the Bald's first wife, was anointed and crowned queen at the abbey church of St-Médard in Soissons. For Kantorowicz this ritual was designed to have the 'effects of a *Fruchtsbarkeitszauber*', a fertility spell, that 'attribute[d] extra-sacramental powers to a sacramental act'.⁷ Fertility subsequently became central to how historians interpreted the form and function of Ermentrude's consecration. While acknowledging that anointing and coronation enhanced queenly status, Jane Hyam and Richard Jackson likened it to a 'fertility rite'.⁸ Michael Enright more strongly identified 'explicit usage of holy oil as a fertility charm'.⁹

The fertility rite interpretation influenced scholarship on queen-making more broadly. The oldest surviving Carolingian royal *ordines*, liturgical texts containing prayers for anointing and crowning, were for queens. The earliest surviving *ordo* was produced

for the marriage of Ermentrude's daughter Judith to Aethelwulf of Wessex in 856. The Ermentrude *ordo* is the second oldest. According to Enright Judith's unction had the 'magico-religious purpose of making her fertile', an interpretation premised on what Ermentrude's consecration putatively revealed about the fertility-inducing powers attributed to sacred oil.¹⁰ With greater nuance Pauline Stafford's landmark synopsis of early medieval queenship discerned parallels, if not quite complete equivalence, between 856 and 866. While fertility was the 'sole purpose' of Ermentrude's consecration, Judith's consecration was 'partly a fertility rite', but the status change of queen-making was ultimately about the status of future sons, for 'anointings served less to transfer powers to a queen than to underline her function as the producer of heirs to the throne'.¹¹ The interpretative stakes are higher still because Ermentrude's consecration remains an important reference point, often in its 'glorified fertility rite' guise, within scholarship on later medieval queen-making.¹² Ironically the Ermentrude *ordo*'s influence on later Carolingian and post-Carolingian *ordines* was in fact negligible.¹³

Maternity undoubtedly shaped the role of queens. Childbearing was one of the expected 'rhythms' of medieval queenship.¹⁴ But important revisionist scholarship by Janet Nelson and Julie Ann Smith has illuminated the richer range of queenly attributes and functions enumerated within the Judith and Ermentrude *ordines*, including a role in promoting justice and responsibility for good works. Both *ordines* projected images of co-rulership that gave formal expression to the informal power queens exercised through proximity to the king.¹⁵ By virtue of situating queen-making within a symbolic nexus and ritual context shared with king-making, they conspicuously elevated queenly status. Both *ordines* might have called for the queen's fertility in a few prayers, but they called for much else besides.¹⁶

The Ermentrude *ordo* epitomises the elevated political profile of queens by the mid-ninth century. From 842 until her death in 869 Ermentrude's career overlapped with an ongoing formalisation of queenship through liturgy, diplomas and other media.¹⁷ The intensifying discourse on queenship was double-edged. Some contemporaries articulated the role of queens to circumscribe or even ensnare royal women within a net of normative expectations. In 830 politically charged accusations of adultery were lodged against the empress Judith, Charles the Bald's mother, together with intimations of Louis the Pious's blunted virility. Judith's defenders and critics alike shared presumptions about the centrality of the queen at the royal court and, by extension, in governance of the realm.¹⁸ The politicised sexual slander of the early 830s catalysed the discourse on queenship current during Ermentrude's career. Seen in this light, formalisation and sacralisation through queen-making offered royal women a kind of protection from or pre-emption of political attack.¹⁹ The sexualised language through which such attack was repeatedly expressed from the 830s onward emerged precisely when Carolingian queens occupied a more pronounced role as political helpmates alongside their long-standing role as physical mates.²⁰

Following Nelson and Smith it is no longer tenable simply to boil queen-making down to the residue of fertility rites.²¹ Yet the significance of fertility at Ermentrude's consecration merits re-examination because the theme of royal fertility, not just the queen's fertility, was peculiarly present; or, at any rate, this is how certain protagonists very deliberately framed the consecration. This is not premised on the assumption that queen-making was intrinsically, always and everywhere, some sort of fertility rite; in fact, fertility was unusually important at Ermentrude's consecration. Queen-making *ordines* may look like a 'type of text...intended to capture the essence of queenship in abstract

and absolute terms', but they are better approached as political improvisations.²² Rather than a comprehensive distillation of queenship that formally defined a 'transpersonal' office, the Ermentrude *ordo* was a bespoke liturgy moulded by and for specific circumstances.²³

Grasping the significance of fertility at Ermentrude's consecration first requires reviewing those circumstances: dynastic pressures in west Francia, partly the product of a misfiring succession strategy; the ideological capital of queenship by the 860s; and tensions and opportunities generated by the ongoing Lothar II-Theutberga controversy next door in Lotharingia. The article turns next to the forms in which texts associated with Ermentrude's consecration survive. The prayer formulas of the Ermentrude *ordo* have already been carefully analysed and fruitfully compared with the Judith *ordo*. Fertility is a detectable but relatively muted theme. Unlike the Judith *ordo*, however, prayer formulas are not all that survive. An introductory address or *adlocutio* by two bishops survives too and it provides the interpretative key for decoding Ermentrude's consecration.²⁴ The *adlocutio* explicitly explained the consecration in terms of dynastic needs and, moreover, justified it through a condensed sequence of carefully chosen scriptural references. The *adlocutio* was channelling a political idiom that consciously grafted royal fertility onto biblical templates. This idiom, which originated in attempts to articulate divine sanction of Carolingian dynastic power earlier in the ninth century, had become amplified in west Frankish political culture by the 860s. Biblical affinities in the *adlocutio* not only articulated hopes about physical fecundity at a time when the dynastic future was uncertain, but also expressed ideologically calculated messages about divine sanction of good kingship designed to resonate in the political climate of the 860s.

Background to August 866: Dynastic pressures, queenship and marriage politics

Dynastic pressures explain the timing of Ermentrude's consecration.²⁵ She had been married to Charles the Bald for twenty-three years. They probably already had eleven children, including six sons. But in August 866 the succession picture was problematic. One reason is that up to four sons had been earmarked for ecclesiastical careers starting with Carloman in 854.²⁶ Clerical tonsure came with rewards. Carloman accumulated control over prime monastic real estate and, incidentally, was abbot of St-Médard by the time of his mother's consecration there.²⁷ Previous rulers had tonsured nephews or sons of concubines to prune the family tree of excess branches. Charles's dynastic innovation was to wield shears on legitimate sons. Although ambiguities remained over whether it absolutely precluded future succession, clerical tonsure was intended to funnel certain sons away from the throne.²⁸ Further sons – Lothar and the twins Drogo and Pippin – looked set for the same clerical career path, but all three were dead by August 866.²⁹

The eldest sons, Louis the Stammerer and Charles the Child, got to keep their hair. But confidence in their suitability for kingship was low. In the early 860s both had mounted rebellions and contracted marriages that flouted paternal authority. Louis also aided and abetted the 'abduction' of his twice-widowed sister Judith by Baldwin of Flanders.³⁰ That was not all. Whether or not Charles's death within a month of the consecration was anticipated, a debilitating head injury sustained during a mock fight in 864 had left him, in the jarring words of a Lotharingian contemporary, dishonoured (*debonestatus*).³¹ Indeed, Louis's stutter – *Balbus* looks like a contemporary tag – was disabling for any prospective ruler given the acoustics of assembly politics and court culture.³² Filial rebellion had undermined a dynastic strategy aimed at minimising the

possibility of too many adult sons vying for a share of power and untimely deaths had depleted the stock of possible replacements.³³ A defining characteristic of Charles the Bald's reign rendered the problematic succession picture all the more conspicuous. Through a proliferation of anniversaries for past, present and future family members together with stipulations of prayers for his wife and children in diplomas and masses for rulers, royal authority in Charles's kingdom had developed a markedly dynastic feel.³⁴

There were reasons for wanting more sons in August 866. Yet Ermentrude had become more than a provider of future Carolingians. Take, for example, a poem in honour of her written by John Scottus Eriugena in the 860s. Ermentrude's maternity, the 'gift of great offspring', was one hue within a richer palette of queenly virtues. Eriugena lauded her demeanour, appearance, ancestry, reputation, learned speech and even consummate needlework. Ermentrude prayed, read and, through her charity and chastity, exuded a virtue reminiscent of biblical women.³⁵ In a dozen or so lines Eriugena had tightly compressed ideas about queenship elaborated at greater length by contemporaries like Sedulius Scottus.³⁶ In one sense these were safely domesticated virtues.³⁷ But, of course, the domestic locus of Carolingian queenship was the royal household. As Hincmar outlined in *De ordine palatii*, written for Ermentrude's grandson Carloman in 882, the sphere in which queens operated was a palatial space.³⁸ Moreover, Eriugena highlighted the 'affairs of the kingdom / which she watches and tends with both feeling and skill'.³⁹ As Paul Dutton has suggested, the likely subtext was Ermentrude's role in diplomatic exchanges on sensitive ecclesiastical and political matters, including the Judith-Baldwin issue, with Pope Nicholas I in 862-3. Eriugena's praise for Ermentrude's needlework, her 'great skill, [even] mastery, in the art of Athena', ought to be seen in the dazzling light of the gem-studded garment Nicholas received by 864, a gift very likely

manufactured by Ermentrude herself.⁴⁰ In a society where female textile work provided the material culture of elite social bonds, a queen's needle could have a political point.⁴¹ If Eriugena's poem absorbed contemporary thinking about queenship, it also contains imprints of how Ermentrude exercised that role.

Scholars have identified further imprints elsewhere. Surviving letters from churchmen invited Ermentrude's intervention into sometimes tricky ecclesiastical matters while her appearances in Charles's diplomas, especially as intercessor or grantor, yield other traces of a woman who wielded real influence.⁴² Admittedly, developments in the diplomatic designation of Carolingian queens do not line up into neat linear trajectories of queenly power, though, as Roberta Cimino has observed, the uneven oscillation between spousal and regnal designations captures the queen's fusion of familial and political roles.⁴³ Nonetheless, formal expression of Ermentrude's role in diplomas does point to the elevated profile of the queen in western Francia. After 853 she was regularly named, often as *coniux* but sometimes also as *regina* and on occasion as *consors regni*.⁴⁴ Anointing and coronation are commonly approached as inauguration rituals that created 'new social personalit[ies]' and solidified status changes.⁴⁵ Relatedly, other west Frankish *ordines* were produced at transformative moments: Judith's marriage in 856, Charles the Bald's takeover of Lotharingia in 869 and Louis the Stammerer's succession in 877. Ermentrude's consecration, long after she had been acting as queen in deed and sometimes in name, looks more anomalous. If anything, it confirmed, rather than conferred, her status.⁴⁶

Of course, the growing ideological profile of queenship is not easily disentangled from the evolving ideological profile of kingship. After all, the *loci classici* on Carolingian queenship penned by Sedulius and Hincmar appeared within mirrors for princes. When

Charles's diplomas included memorial stipulations they often named Ermentrude and, from 870, Richildis. As Emmanuelle Santinelli-Foltz has recently argued, inclusion of the queen in Charles's memorializing drive peaked at politically significant moments and places. Projecting an image of joint rule exercised by king and queen in a legitimate union had become a means of reasserting authority and recalibrating socio-political bonds.⁴⁷ Eriugena was switched on to this ideological style. His poem culminated in an image of Charles and Ermentrude as *potentes*, joint wielders of power.⁴⁸ In a political culture where the discursive potency of queenship generated ideological capital for kings there was method to the madness of consecrating a queen over two decades after she had become the king's wife.

The image of the royal couple had become one prominent way of expressing power and, as we shall see, the Ermentrude *ordo* was steeped in borrowings from marriage liturgy. There was another reason for the conjugal emphasis in August 866. Franz-Reiner Erkens has argued that Ermentrude was anointed and crowned with one eye on Lotharingia. Her consecration underlined Charles's conjugal propriety in calculated contrast with his nephew Lothar II's marital problems next door.⁴⁹ Indeed, it is worth stressing that in 866 queenship and fertility were two themes that sharpened the contrast.

A year earlier in 865 Lothar had been pressured into formally reinstating Theutberga as his wife and queen. Two west Frankish bishops, Isaac of Langres and Erchenraus of Châlons, kick-started ceremonial proceedings on Charles's behalf in an event overseen by the papal legate Arsenius.⁵⁰ But by 866 Theutberga and Charles appeared to be supporting Lothar's push for a dissolution.⁵¹ The pope was left perplexed by these shifts in the pattern of political alliances. In separate letters to Lothar and Theutberga in January 867 Nicholas reiterated his opposition while tackling new arguments head on. He had

been nudged into action by a now-lost letter from Theutberga presumably written at some point in 866, in which she invoked her own sterility as one ground for divorce. The argument did not wash with Nicholas I, who sharply turned a question mark over Theutberga's fertility into a question mark over Lothar's kingship. The real cause of Theutberga's supposed sterility (*sterilitas*) was Lothar's wickedness rather than bodily infertility (*corporis infecunditas*).⁵² In the body politics of the 860s sterile queenly bodies could be re-diagnosed as symptoms of bad kingship.⁵³

Ermentrude's consecration took place when questions of royal fertility were in the air across the Carolingian world. Dynastic pressures were palpable in western Francia while the childlessness of Lothar's seemingly inescapable marriage to Theutberga was upping the political stakes in Lotharingia. A year on from their involvement at Theutberga's ceremonial reinstatement, Isaac and Erchenraus were in attendance at Soissons. They were probably not alone in noticing the contrast between a fertile, legitimate royal marriage and a childless, disputed union further west. That same contrast surely struck the 'coronation impresario' behind the Ermentrude *ordo* and introductory *adlocutio* too: Hincmar of Rheims.⁵⁴

Mixed messages: The Ermentrude *ordo*

Before turning to the prayer formulas Hincmar devised, it is worth clarifying the forms in which the *ordo* and *adlocutio* survive. The *ordo* is known from Jacques Sirmond's seventeenth-century edition based on a now lost Liège manuscript from the monastery of St-Laurent, which also contained the '*adlocutio* of two bishops in the church of St-Médard when Ermentrude was consecrated as queen'. Sirmond's attribution to Hincmar

was based partly on the manuscript's contents: the three other west Frankish *ordines* he produced and some of his letters.⁵⁵

The *adlocutio*, but not the *ordo*, also survives in a ninth-century manuscript (Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, 407). Produced at Rheims and containing some of his correspondence, this manuscript further solidifies the Hincmar connection.⁵⁶ While the Laon version of the *adlocutio* is very similar to the lost Liège version, it names Herard of Tours as the first bishop to speak. Herard's contribution to the *adlocutio* flowed on from his closing remarks at the council of Soissons. Indeed, the Laon manuscript looks like a dossier produced in connection with the council, which had convened from 18th August 866 to settle a thorny matter. An earlier council of Soissons in 853 had declared ordinations of clerics by Ebbo of Rheims in 840-1 invalid. But Charles the Bald's aspiration that one of those clerics, Wulfad, should become archbishop of Bourges necessitated a re-examination of the issue. The 866 council engineered acceptance of Wulfad's ordination without scrapping the earlier council's decision, but renewed scrutiny of his predecessor's deposition spearheaded at a distance by Nicholas I made life awkward for Hincmar.⁵⁷ Ermentrude's consecration took place at the end of a tense week-long council in the presence of seven archbishops and twenty-eight bishops. Hincmar's not exactly impartial write-up of the council in the *Annales Bertiniani* hints at a spur of the moment decision. Charles had asked the bishops to consecrate Ermentrude before they packed up to leave Soissons.⁵⁸

Hincmar had devised the *adlocutio* and *ordo*, then, in trying circumstances and might well have had to work in haste. Back in 856 he had crafted a structured *ordo* for Judith, which combined elements of conventional marriage liturgy with formulas carefully adapted from a pre-existing Anglo-Saxon *ordo* for a king.⁵⁹ The Ermentrude *ordo*, by

contrast, was assembled less smoothly from marriage liturgy, prayers from the Judith *ordo* and scriptural references.⁶⁰

Fertility is a fleeting refrain. First, part of the anointing formula, ‘Make her beget offspring, which reaches the inheritance of your paradise’, was copied-and-pasted from the Judith *ordo*;⁶¹ and also, ‘may she be fecund with offspring pleasing to you’, was one of several prayers reproduced in a block from marriage liturgy.⁶² There was no special connection between unction and fertility, for the anointing formula emphasized the virtues of the ideal wife, including chastity and loyalty, and ideal queen, including sacred learning, justice and good works. Second, the final blessing recalled God’s blessing of Adam and Eve (‘Go forth and multiply’, Genesis 1.28) and marriages of biblical patriarchs. Charles and Ermentrude ‘should both grow old in good old age and see sons of your sons flourishing in the Lord’s will’, another adaptation from marriage liturgy.⁶³ Indeed, the *ordo* feels steeped in nuptial imagery. Ermentrude was invited to become an ‘imitator of holy women’ invoked in marriage liturgy to exemplify ideal wives: loveable like Rachel, wise like Rebecca, loyal like Sarah.⁶⁴ By contrast, biblical models in the Judith *ordo* such as Esther were royal or otherwise powerful women who were not invoked as exemplary spouses.⁶⁵ Yet even if the theme of queen as ruler was more pronounced in the Judith *ordo*, the Ermentrude *ordo* nonetheless contained suggestive hints of co-rulership with a queen crowned with ‘holy fruits and blessed works’ and adorned with the ‘crown of justice’.⁶⁶ In sum, fecundity was diluted by stronger traces of royal honour, good works, conjugality and co-rulership. Given the mixed messages, the Ermentrude *ordo* looks like a decidedly odd fertility rite.

The interpretative key: Herard’s *adlocutio*

Any argument for the special importance of fertility at Ermentrude's consecration would fall apart if the *ordo* was all that survived. But it was introduced by that *adlocutio*. The second bishop to speak, unnamed but possibly Hincmar, firmly established that bishops were obligated 'not to ignore petitions [from the faithful]...especially if we see with clear signs that these petitions have been conceived through God's inspiration'.⁶⁷ Herard of Tours's contribution, written by Hincmar, had already established the nature of the petition being sought. It merits close attention. Whereas the prayer formulas gave broad-ranging definition to queenship, Herard's *adlocutio* framed the consecration more tightly within dynastic concerns and questions of royal fertility.

Herard explained that Charles had asked the bishops to anoint and crown Ermentrude just as he had previously been. Herard hastened to provide a *ratio*, a rationale, 'in case it should seem surprising to you why he should seek this'.⁶⁸ Immediately, he placed Charles's request in dynastic context. By God's grace the *regnum* had coalesced in the hands of Charles's predecessors and had now passed down to Charles, to whom God had given sons. Here Herard tackled the problematic succession picture head on. Charles had offered some of his sons as an 'oblation to God from the fruit (*fructum*) of his belly'.⁶⁹ Technically they had been tonsured as clerics, but the language redolent of monastic child oblation is significant. By the ninth century parents' donation of their children to monastic life was commonly conceptualised as giving *fructum* to God and sometimes the hope of future fertility in return might have been a motivation for parents.⁷⁰ Other sons, Herard continued, had been taken by God at a young age.⁷¹ Finally, presumably referring to Louis the Stammerer and the incapacitated Charles the Child, Herard noted that 'as is not unknown to you, God in His judgment has allowed such suffering to come upon other [sons]' that even the king's *fideles* were reeling.⁷²

Now Herard unambiguously spelled out the gift Charles sought from God through the bishops' mediation, an 'episcopal blessing to come upon his wife, so that from her the Lord may deign to give him such offspring whence, along with those he has up to now, the holy church may find relief and the kingdom a needed defence'.⁷³ He concluded with a scripturally laced justification for Charles's request. A little convoluted, it must be said, Herard's climax is worth quoting in full:

And about this we have authority in holy scriptures because just as the Lord said to Abraham: In your seed all peoples will be blessed,⁷⁴ He gave him already a hundred years old a son, Isaac, from a ninety year old wife, and likewise he made Isaac himself take a sterile wife so that in this, as He is accustomed to do in many things, He could demonstrate the abundance of his mercy. And then scripture says that because Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife [Rebecca] because she was barren, she conceived.⁷⁵ And it should not be surprising to you why He[?] did not do this before, for as sacred scripture says, in the beginning of the union of male and female the Lord said to Eve: Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.⁷⁶ And when by custom Abraham and Sarah were old in a legitimate union and of advanced age and, as St Peter says: Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him lord,⁷⁷ the Lord said something to Abraham which we read He had not previously said to him or to anyone else: Listen to everything that Sarah has told you.⁷⁸ For Abraham was rightly called a priest and Sarah's womanlies had ceased, that is, all lustfulness. And then they received the blessing of the seed blessed by the Lord, in which all peoples are blessed. Amen.⁷⁹

The next section will shortly unpack this dense sequence of biblical allusions. But first it should be noted that differences in how historians interpret Ermentrude's consecration partly reflect whether they focus upon the *ordo* or the *adlocutio*. They ought to be read together without being conflated. The *adlocutio*'s biblical framework activated new meanings in the *ordo*'s otherwise commonplace nuptial prayers. The image of sons of sons flourishing in the final blessing gained a new resonance in light of God's blessing of Abraham's seed. Similarly, invocation of Rachel, Rebecca and Sarah in the anointing formula, standard in marriage liturgy, took on an additional layer of meaning: in reverse order Rachel, Rebecca and Sarah were three generations of women from Genesis who received the gift of fertility from God. In and of itself the Ermentrude *ordo* absorbed contemporary thinking about queenship. The *adlocutio* provided the interpretative key for the liturgical drama about to unfold by unequivocally establishing the core dynastic rationale and foregrounding the theme of royal fertility modelled on divine blessing of Abraham, Sarah and their descendants.

Biblical templates for Carolingian fertility

Carolingian biblical culture provides the ultra-violet light needed to render the significance of royal fertility at Ermentrude's consecration visible. Once maligned as not much more than a bunch of monks plagiarising patristic authorities in mind-numbing commentaries, the uses and meanings of scripture in Carolingian politics and culture have been rehabilitated in recent decades.⁸⁰ Scholars have become increasingly sensitive to how Carolingian authors thought with scripture to articulate and address political, social and spiritual concerns.⁸¹ Moreover, kings and queens numbered among recipients of

exegetical and other works that thought with scripture, and at least some members of the lay elite were interlocutors within Carolingian biblical culture.⁸²

Mayke de Jong has recently conceptualised the impact of scriptural models upon the Carolingian elite in terms of ‘repertoires of identification’, a shorthand for finding and expressing affinities between biblical narratives and contemporary situations.⁸³ While the execution was a little convoluted, Herard’s *adlocutio* was a repertoire of identification in action. The *adlocutio* did not simply regurgitate bits of scripture but trimmed biblical templates to fit with the circumstances. Like Isaac, Charles sought from God the gift of fertility for his wife through petitionary prayer.⁸⁴ Like Abraham and Sarah, Charles and Ermentrude were not exactly in their reproductive prime; precisely for this reason the exercise of married sexuality was all the more sanctified.⁸⁵ Unlike votive masses ‘for the sterility of women’, which concentrated squarely on biblical women including Sarah and Rebecca, the *adlocutio*’s repertoire of identification represented the quest for conception as a conjugal enterprise.⁸⁶

Moreover, the biblical framework amounted to an affinity greater than the sum of its parts, which cuts to the heart of how dynastic legitimacy and royal fertility had come to be articulated in western Francia by the mid-ninth century. The idea that God had specially chosen and blessed the Carolingian line can be traced back to texts related to Pippin’s anointing in 754. A letter from Pope Stephen II to Pippin in 757 expressed the hope that God would extend the new king’s *semen* and bless it forever more. Surviving in the *Codex Carolinus* (re)assembled under Charlemagne in 791, this was one way in which the beginnings of Carolingian power were being remembered in the later eighth century.⁸⁷ This idea came to be fused with more than one biblical template. In the Stuttgart Psalter, for example, an illumination depicting the anointing of a king accompanies Psalm 88, all

about God's blessing of David's *semen*. The Psalter illustrates a mental association between kingly anointing and divine blessing of royal *semen*.⁸⁸ Abraham provided the template for election and descent of kings in *Deus inenarrabilis*, a regal blessing that survives in liturgical manuscripts from around the turn of the ninth century but likely pre-dates Charlemagne's reign. It recalled how God had 'pre-elected future kings for the world from the womb of your faithful friend, our patriarch Abraham'.⁸⁹

At Louis the Pious's court the raw materials of Abraham's covenant with God were fully reassembled into a sanctification of Carolingian fertility. Writing a decade or so after Louis's anointing by Pope Stephen IV in 816, Ermoldus Nigellus put these words into the pope's mouth as his hand was poised above Louis's head:

May the almighty, who increased the *semen* of Abraham, grant that you see children born, whence you will be called grandfather. May He grant you progeny, may He double and triple your descendants, so that a fruitful harvest may grow from your *semen*, which will rule the Franks as well as powerful Rome[.]⁹⁰

As Dominique Alibert has pointed out, this was the first Carolingian text about royal anointing to invoke Abraham.⁹¹ The blessing received by Abraham had gained in political resonance at the same time as it had narrowed in focus. Far from signifying all peoples or kingship in abstract, Abraham's *semen* evoked Carolingian *semen* and its divine sanction.

As a young boy Charles the Bald would have seen frescoes depicting Abraham and his offspring while running around the royal palace at Ingelheim.⁹² Decades later the idiom of royal fertility modelled on Abraham reverberated at his own court. Sedulius

Scottus's chapter on the queen in *De rectoribus Christianis* culminated in a verse that reiterated a key theme: the familial was political, the political was spiritual. If king and queen governed their family properly they would rule the kingdom well and 'adorn the heavens with descendants procreated as if from Abraham's line'.⁹³ More than one of Sedulius's court poems for Charles, 'splendid progeny from the *semen* of Charlemagne', aligned Carolingian dynastic succession with the patriarchs of Genesis: Charlemagne-Abraham, Louis the Pious-Isaac, Charles the Bald-Jacob.⁹⁴ Sedulius had other patrons. He celebrated the fertility of Lothar I and Ermengard, and honoured their son Charles of Provence as a 'new Charles from the *semen* of Charlemagne'.⁹⁵ But evocation of Abraham and his descendants was noticeably absent from his poems for the Lotharingian court.⁹⁶ Biblical templates for Carolingian fertility had become a particularly west Frankish way of conceptualising divine sanction of dynastic continuity.

Two final pieces of evidence really convey the resonance of this idiom at Charles the Bald's court. In the Judith *ordo* Hincmar had made careful adaptations from his Anglo-Saxon source through which he 'gendered the function and qualities of the queen'.⁹⁷ But the penultimate prayer was his own improvisation with scriptural materials: 'Fill [Judith] with the blessings of the breasts and womb.⁹⁸ May the blessings of the ancient fathers redouble upon her and her *semen*, just as You promised Your servant Abraham and his *semen* forever'.⁹⁹ The Judith *ordo* captures why Carolingian rulers sought to control their daughters' marriages. Royal women transmitted divinely blessed *semen*.

The second piece of evidence dates from the uncertain early days of Charles's reign. In her *Liber manualis* Dhuoda urged her son William to be loyal to Charles and his kin because 'as we believe, God chose and pre-elected them in rule, granting to them glory that tends to resembles in its greatness that promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their

noble offspring and *semen*'.¹⁰⁰ At least some members of the lay elite had internalised the biblical idiom of royal fertility by the very beginning of Charles's reign. Over two decades later, Herard's *adlocutio* channelled this idiom. Foregrounded through biblical templates, the theme of fertility at Ermentrude's consecration communicated messages about kingship as much as queenship.

Conclusion

Ermentrude's consecration captures the elevated profile and formalisation of queenship by the mid-ninth century. The *ordo* for her anointing and coronation delineated conjugal, judicial, spiritual and regnal dimensions of the role exercised by queens. It also reserved conceptual space within Carolingian political theology for the 'queen by merits, name and virtue' in this world and 'crowned with honour and glory by the right hand of the king' in the world to come.¹⁰¹ But Carolingian *ordines* for queens and kings are rich sources for political culture precisely because liturgies for anointing and coronation had not yet calcified into solid forms.¹⁰² When gathered into modern single volumes *ordines* take on the deceptive appearance of a fixed genre. This masks their spasmodic production often in politically charged moments. Like other *ordines* for queens such as the later Ottonian *Ordo III*, in which the queen's fertility in particular really did loom large, the Ermentrude *ordo* was a bespoke liturgy shaped by and for specific circumstances.¹⁰³ There were concrete reasons for expressing abstract ideas about queenship.

One reason in 866 was dynastic. But the liturgy for Ermentrude's consecration did not slide into fertility rite mode through the quasi-magical lubrication of holy oil. Without ignoring the rich expression of queenship in the *ordo*, close attention to the *adlocutio* illuminates the significance of fertility in August 866; and it is worth stressing that the

historical memory of Ermentrude's consecration preserved in the extant Laon manuscript was entirely shaped by the *adlocutio*. At one level, the *adlocutio* introduced a liturgical response to dynastic pressures. One modern temptation is to see prayers for fertility as a form of helplessness, as the desperation of a last resort.¹⁰⁴ This may be to underestimate the extent to which liturgical enthusiasts like Charles the Bald believed in the spiritual efficacy of prayers and masses.¹⁰⁵ His hopes for the divine gift of further sons survived beyond Ermentrude's death in 869. When granting St-Eligius to the church of Paris in 872 he requested that the bishop should celebrate the 'birth of our offspring with continuous care of masses and prayers, if such should be granted by the fruitful Virgin'.¹⁰⁶ Even after two infant sons born to Richildis died in 875 and 877 Charles was still holding out hopes that God might give him another son a few months before his own death.¹⁰⁷

But liturgical enthusiasts also believed in the power of liturgy as a form of political communication. Royal fertility bore multiple meanings in August 866. The 'blessing of the *semen*, blessed by the Lord' had accumulated a powerful symbolic resonance in political culture. It denoted divine sanction of dynastic continuity. The long-standing interpretation of Ermentrude's consecration as the quintessential example of queen-making as fertility rite has missed how the biblical language of royal fertility communicated messages about kingship – and in more than one kingdom. As claims of Theutberga's alleged sterility were surfacing, claims which Nicholas I would soon turn into an indictment of Lothar II's kingship early in 867, these calculated messages were attuned to a body politics in which fertility was a morally charged issue for kings too. The queen's womb was conspicuously absent from the *adlocutio* and *ordo*, for they were squarely focussed on *semen*, biblical and royal. Herein lies the significance of fertility at

Ermentrude's consecration: the dynastic importance of bodily fertility but also the political resonance of royal fertility modelled on biblical templates.

There is one final irony. The agency of queens is hard to detect in the rituals that elevated their status. In the hunt for Ermentrude's agency scholars have had to 'perfect the skills of trackers and scouts' to follow her trail in diplomas, letters and poems.¹⁰⁸ The trail seems to go cold at her consecration. This is not altogether surprising. As Simon MacLean has recently cautioned, delineation of queenship and agency of queens did not always go hand in hand.¹⁰⁹ After all, the knottiest portion of the *adlocutio* had underlined the gendered hierarchy of marriage established at the Fall. This was why husbands like Isaac and Charles petitioned God for children, not their wives. Yet forensic analysis of one last biblical affinity may just identify fingerprints from Ermentrude's hand. Janet Nelson has asked whether Ermentrude was the one who came up with the idea of ritual consecration.¹¹⁰ Nuancing the emphasis on the dominion of husbands over wives, Herard's *adlocutio* quoted God's words to Abraham: 'Listen to everything Sarah has told you'. Perhaps that was the point of this particular affinity.¹¹¹ Like her biblical model, Ermentrude had provided wise counsel within the gendered constraints of marriage.

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¹ J.L. Nelson, 'The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual', in J.L. Nelson, *The Frankish World 750-900* (London, 1996), pp. 99-131, at p. 124.

² R. McKitterick, 'Women in the Ottonian Church: An Iconographic Perspective', in W.J. Sheils and D. Wood (ed.), *Women in the Church*, Studies in Church History 27 (Oxford, 1990), pp. 79-100, at p. 80. The image can be viewed online:
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/16/Bible_carolingienne_%28Charles_le_Chauve%29.jpg/800px-Bible_carolingienne_%28Charles_le_Chauve%29.jpg [last accessed 23/01/2018].

³ 'Nobilis ad levam coniunx de more venustat, / Qua insignis proles in regnum rite paretur', *Bibliothecarum et psalteriorum versus* 6.1, ll.13-14, ed. L. Traube, *MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini* 3 (Berlin, 1896), p. 257; translation adapted from E. Kantorowicz, 'The Carolingian King in the Bible of San Paolo fuori le mura', in K. Weitzmann (ed.), *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 287-300, at p. 288.

⁴ On Charles the Fat's attempts to solve the succession problem in the 880s, see S. MacLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 123-98, 218-22.

⁵ Kantorowicz, 'Carolingian King', pp. 288-95, quotation at p. 295, also stressed that the Bible's origins in a west Frankish scriptorium and use of *rex* rather than *imperator* in the verse dedication rendered identification with Charles the Fat less likely. On the Bible's likely production at Rheims, see R. McKitterick, 'Charles the Bald (823-877) and his Library: The Patronage of Learning', *English Historical Review* 95 (1980), pp. 28-47, at pp. 41-2.

⁶ W. Diebold, 'The Ruler Portrait of Charles the Bald in the S. Paolo Bible', *The Art Bulletin* 76 (1994), pp. 6-18, at p. 7n.1.

⁷ Kantorowicz, 'Carolingian King', p. 293, with n.21 acknowledging his interpretative debt to Percy Ernst Schramm.

⁸ J. Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', in J.L. Nelson and M. Gibson (eds), *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, (Oxford, 1981), pp. 153-68, at p. 156; R. Jackson, 'Who Wrote Hincmar's Ordines?', *Viator* 25 (1994), pp. 31-52, at p. 35; cf. S. Airle, 'Private Bodies and the Body Politic in the Divorce Case of Lothar II', *Past & Present* 161 (1998), pp. 3-38, at p. 21.

⁹ M.J. Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons: The Origin of the Royal Anointing Ritual* (Berlin, 1985), p. 157. For similar emphasis on unction and fecundity see P. Buc, 'David's Adultery with Bathsheba and the Healing Power of Capetian Kings', *Viator* 24 (1993), pp. 101-20, at pp. 104-5; D. Iogna-Prat, 'La Vierge et les ordines de couronnement des reines au IX^e siècle', in D. Iogna-Prat, E. Palazzo and D. Russo (eds), *Marie: Le culte de la Vierge dans la société médiévale* (Paris, 1996), pp. 101-7, at p. 106.

¹⁰ M.J. Enright, 'Charles the Bald and Aethelwulf of Wessex: The Alliance of 856 and Strategies of Royal Succession', *Journal of Medieval History* 5.4 (1979), pp. 291-302, at p. 298.

¹¹ P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages*, paperback edn (London, 1998), pp. 87, 89, 130-1, quotations at p. 131; cf. P. Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex 800-1066', *Past & Present* 91 (1981), pp. 3-27, at pp. 16-17.

¹² As noted critically by J.L. Laynesmith, 'Fertility Rite or Authority Ritual? The Queen's Coronation in England, 1445-87', in T. Thornton (ed.), *Social Attitudes and Political Structures in the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 52-68, quotation at p. 54. For examples, see A. Weyl Carr, 'Threads of Authority: The Virgin Mary's Veil in the Middle Ages', in S. Gordon (ed.), *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 59-93, at p. 75; D.L. Sadler, *Reading the Reverse Façade of Reims Cathedral: Royalty and Ritual in Thirteenth-Century France* (Farnham, 2012), p. 130.

¹³ Jackson, 'Hincmar's Ordines', p. 36.

¹⁴ J.C. Parsons, 'Introduction: Family, Sex, and Power: The Rhythms of Medieval Queenship', in J.C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 1-11, esp. pp. 4-5; Stafford, *Queens*, pp. 60-92.

¹⁵ Cf. J.L. Nelson, 'Bertrada', in M. Becher and J. Jarnut (eds), *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung* (Münster, 2004), pp. 93-108, at p. 101; E.J. Goldberg, 'Regina nitens sanctissima Hemme: Queen Emma (827-876), Bishop Witgar of Augsburg and the Witgar-Belt', in B. Weiler and S. MacLean (eds), *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany 800-1500* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 57-95, at pp. 61-2.

¹⁶ J.L. Nelson, 'Early Medieval Rites of Queen-Making and the Shaping of Medieval Queenship', in A.J. Duggan (ed.), *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 301-15; J.A. Smith, 'The Earliest Queen-Making Rites', *Church History* 66.1 (1997), pp. 18-35.

¹⁷ Airlie, 'Private Bodies', pp. 20-6; S. MacLean, 'Queenship, Nunneries and Royal Widowhood in Carolingian Europe', *Past & Present* 178 (2003), pp. 3-38, at pp. 8-10; Goldberg, 'Regina', pp. 60-70; S. MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 11-16.

¹⁸ E. Ward, 'Agobard of Lyons and Paschasius Radbertus as Critics of the Empress Judith', in Sheils and Wood, *Women*, pp. 15-25; E.F. Ward, 'The Career of the Empress Judith 819-843', Ph.D. thesis, University of London (2002), pp. 172-205; M. de Jong, 'Bride Shows Revisited: Praise, Slander and Exegesis in the Reign of the Empress Judith', in L. Brubaker and J.M.H. Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 257-77; M. de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 185-213; I am grateful to Mayke de Jong for reiterating to me the significance of the 830s for Carolingian discourse on queenship. On the subsequent proliferation of sexual accusations against Carolingian queens, see G. Bühner-Thierry, 'La reine adultère', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 35 (1992), pp. 299-312.

¹⁹ Goldberg, 'Regina', p. 62.

²⁰ de Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 194.

²¹ Stafford, *Queens*, pp. xvi-xvii (from the 1998 paperback edition), signals that her thinking on queenly consecration shifted since original publication in 1983; thus, P. Stafford, 'Powerful Women in the Early Middle

Ages: Queens and Abbesses', in P. Linehan and J.L. Nelson (eds), *The Medieval World* (London, 2001), pp. 398-415, at pp. 409-10, acknowledges fertility as a concern at Ermentrude's consecration but places greater emphasis on official definition of queenship.

²² MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, at p. 183.

²³ S. Bobrycki, 'The Royal Consecration *Ordines* of the Pontifical of Sens from a New Perspective', *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre* 13 (2009), pp. 131-42, at p. 138.

²⁴ In what follows I retain separate terms – *ordo* and *adlocutio* – to refer, respectively, to the liturgy and introductory address.

²⁵ Kantorowicz, 'Carolingian King', p. 292; Hyam, 'Ermentrude', p. 156; J.L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), p. 210; F.-R. Erkens, 'Sicut Esther regina: Die westfränkische Königin als consors regni', *Francia* 20.1 (1993), pp. 15-38, at pp. 28-9.

²⁶ *Annales Bertiniani* [AB] s.a. 854, trans. J.L. Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin* (Manchester, 1991), p. 79.

²⁷ Carloman's abbacy is not the most likely explanation for why the consecration happened at St-Médard. Ermentrude was anointed and crowned at the end of a council there revisiting the invalidation of clerical ordinations by Ebbo of Rheims decided at a previous council of Soissons in 853, which had also met at St-Médard; see p. x below.

²⁸ J.L. Nelson, 'A Tale of Two Princes: Politics, Text, and Ideology in a Carolingian Annal', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 10 (1988), pp. 105-41, esp. pp. 108-15. M. de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden, 1996), pp. 257-9, draws attention to echoes of monastic oblation in contemporary references to Carloman's tonsure.

²⁹ Lothar's tonsure and death: AB s.a. 861, 865, trans. Nelson, pp. 94, 129. Drogo and Pippin, who probably died in 865 or 866, are known from Milo of St-Amand's verse epitaph: *Epitaphium geminorum filiorum Karoli regis*, ed. Traube, *MGH Poetae* 3, pp. 677-8; cf. McKitterick, 'Charles the Bald', p. 45. Some historians identify Drogo and Pippin as sons born to Richildis in the 870s: Enright, 'Charles the Bald', p. 300; C.B. Bouchard, 'The Bosonids or Rising to Power in the Late Carolingian Age', *French Historical Studies* 15.3 (1988), pp. 407-31, at p. 410 (fig. 2). The identification is problematic given Milo's death in 871/2, the possibility that he wrote the

epitaph as the boys' teacher and lack of fit with the pattern of Richildis's pregnancies suggested by the deaths of infant sons in *AB s.a.* 875, 877, trans. Nelson, pp. 187, 199.

³⁰ Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 200-6; S. Joye, 'Carolingian Rulers and Marriage in the Age of Louis the Pious and his Sons', in J.L. Nelson, S. Reynolds and S.M. Johns (eds), *Gender and Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford* (London, 2012), pp. 101-14, at pp. 112-13.

³¹ Ado of Vienne, *Chronicon*, ed. G.H. Pertz, *MGH SS* 2 (Hanover, 1829), p. 323; cf. *AB s.a.* 864, 866, trans. Nelson, pp. 111-12, 134.

³² J.L. Nelson, 'Kingship and Royal Government', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume II, c.700-c.900* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 381-430, at p. 420, with Regino, *Chronicon s.a.* 878, ed. F. Kurze, *MGH SRG* 50 (Hanover, 1890), p. 114, on the *Balbus* appellation.

³³ Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 210.

³⁴ J.W. Wallace-Hadrill, 'A Carolingian Renaissance Prince: The Emperor Charles the Bald', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 64 (1978), pp. 155-84, at p. 166; E. Ewig, 'Remarques sur la stipulation de la prière dans les chartes de Charles le Chauve', in R. Lejeune and J. Deckers (eds), *Clio et son regard: Mélanges d'histoire, d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie offerts à Jacques Stiennon à l'occasion de ses vingt-cinq ans d'enseignement à l'Université de Liège* (Liège, 1982), pp. 221-33; Nelson, 'Lord's Anointed', pp. 125-6. On liturgy see Y. Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles the Bald (877)* (London, 2001), pp. 121-47, esp. 131-5; I.H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World (c.751-877)* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 89-96.

³⁵ 'Praeclaræ sobolis donum', *Carm.* 4.3-7, 13-20, ed. and trans. M.W. Herren, *Iohannis Scotti Eriugena Carmina, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 12 (Dublin, 1993), pp. 72-3.

³⁶ *De rectoribus Christianis*, c.5, ed. and trans. R.W. Dyson, *Sedulius Scottus: De Rectoribus Christianis (On Christian Rulers)* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 76-83, with p. 19 on the likelihood that Sedulius wrote for Charles the Bald; cf. J.M.H. Smith, 'Gender and Ideology in the Early Middle Ages', in R.N. Swanson (ed.), *Gender and Christian Religion*, *Studies in Church History* 34 (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 51-73, at pp. 70-1.

³⁷ P.E. Dutton, 'Eriugena, the Royal Poet', in G.-H. Allard (ed.), *Jean Scot écrivain* (Montreal, 1986), pp. 51-80, at p. 68.

³⁸ *De ordine palatii*, c.22, ed. and trans. T. Gross and R. Schieffer, *MGH Fontes iuris* 3 (Hanover, 1980), pp. 72-4; cf. MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, pp. 11-13.

³⁹ ‘causas regni...quas ipsa perita / Disponit uigilans pectore praecipuo’, *Carm.* 4.21-2, ed. and trans. Herren, pp. 72-3; cf. J.J. Contreni, ‘Women in the Age of Eriugena’, in W. Otten and M.I. Allen (eds), *Eriugena and Creation: Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference on Eriugenian Studies, Held in Honour of Edouard Jeunean, Chicago, 9-12 November 2011* (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 31-50, at p. 34.

⁴⁰ ‘Ingens ingenium, perfecta Palladis arte’, *Carm.* 4.7, ed. and trans. Herren, p. 72; on the diplomatic exchanges, see Dutton, ‘Eriugena’, pp. 67-8.

⁴¹ Cf. V.L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca NY, 2009), pp. 224-68; Goldberg, ‘Regina’, pp. 73-5.

⁴² Hyam, ‘Ermentrude’; S. Gilsdorf, *The Favor of Friends: Intercession and Aristocratic Politics in Carolingian and Ottonian Europe* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 51, 114-15 with n.83; R. Cimino, ‘Women and Gendered Communication: Female Voices in Carolingian Diplomas’, *L’homme: Europäische Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 26.1 (2015), pp. 11-24, at pp. 16-17; J. Bernweiser, ‘Ad deprecationem karissimae et amantissimae conjugis nostre Yrmintrudis: Zur Herrschaftspraxis und zum sozialen Netzwerk der Königin Ermentrud (†869)’, in C. Kunst (ed.), *Matronage: Handlungsstrategien und soziale Netzwerke antike Herrscherfrauen* (Rahden, 2013), pp. 145-56; see Goldberg, ‘Regina’, pp. 66-7, on the more limited role afforded to Emma, Ermentrude’s east Frankish counterpart, in Louis the German’s diplomas.

⁴³ Cimino, ‘Women’, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁴ E. Santinelli-Foltz, ‘In memoria regine: Entretenir la mémoire de la reine à la lumière des diplômes de Charles le Chauve’, in L. Jégou, S. Joye, T. Lienhard and J. Schneider (eds), *Splendor Reginae: Passions, genre et famille: Mélanges en l’honneur de Régine Le Jan* (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 205-28, at p. 210. On the exalted status and occasional use of *consors regni* for Carolingian queens from 848 onward, see MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, pp. 7-9, 14.

⁴⁵ J.L. Nelson, ‘Ritual and Reality in Early Medieval *Ordines*’, in J.L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), pp. 329-39, at p. 334.

⁴⁶ Hyam, ‘Ermentrude’, p. 156.

⁴⁷ Santinelli-Foltz, 'In memoria', pp. 221-7.

⁴⁸ *Carm.* 4.37, ed. and trans. Herren, p. 72.

⁴⁹ Erkens, 'Sicut Esther'. Important recent scholarship on the Lothar II-Theutberga case includes Airle, 'Private Bodies'; K. Heidecker, *The Divorce of Lothar II: Christian Marriage and Political Power in the Carolingian World*, trans. T. Guest (Ithaca NY, 2010); D.L. d'Avray, *Papacy, Monarchy, and Marriage, 860-1600* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 48-63; R. Stone and C. West, *The Divorce of King Lothar and Queen Theutberga: Hincmar of Rheims' De Divortio* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 1-80.

⁵⁰ *AB s.a.* 865, trans. Nelson, pp. 124-6.

⁵¹ Heidecker, *Divorce*, p. 171, with n.93, points to grants of hefty estates to Theutberga in 866 and 867 together with Charles's receipt of St-Vaast in 866 as the price Lothar had to pay for their support.

⁵² *Ep.* 45 (to Theutberga), ed. E. Perels, *MGH Epp.* 6 (Berlin, 1925), p. 320; Nicholas made much the same point in *Ep.* 46 (to Lothar II), p. 324. Among voluminous sources on the case, these letters contain the only explicit mentions of Theutberga's supposed sterility; against the idea that infertility explains Lothar's initial motivation, see Airle, 'Private Bodies', p. 12; Stone and West, *Divorce*, pp. 6-7, 78.

⁵³ J.L. Nelson, 'Bad Kingship in the Earlier Middle Ages', *Haskins Society Journal* 8 (1996), pp. 1-26, at pp. 16-17; Airle, 'Private Bodies', p. 31.

⁵⁴ J.L. Nelson, 'Carolingian Coronation Rituals', *The Court Historian* 9.1 (2004), pp. 1-13, at p. 4.

⁵⁵ 'Adlocutio duorum episcoporum in ecclesia sancti Medardi quando Hermintrudis fuit consecrata in reginam', *Ordo of Ermentrude* 1, ed. R.A. Jackson, *Ordines Coronationis Franciae, Volume I: Texts and Ordines for the Coronation of Frankish and French Kings and Queens in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1995), p. 82, with pp. 73-4 on Sirmond.

⁵⁶ J.J. Contreni, *The Cathedral School of Laon from 850 to 930: Its Manuscripts and Masters* (Munich, 1978), pp. 43, 73.

⁵⁷ R. Stone, 'Introduction: Hincmar's World', in R. Stone and C. West (eds), *Hincmar of Rheims: Life and Work* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 1-43, at pp. 14-15.

⁵⁸ *AB s.a.* 866, trans. Nelson, p. 133-4. For a list of episcopal attendees, see Council of Soissons 866 (text D), ed. W. Hartmann, *MGH Conc.* 4 (Hanover, 1998), pp. 217-8; this account of the council produced for Nicholas I is also preserved in the Laon manuscript. Hartmann's edition includes Herard's closing statement and the *adlocutio* from the Laon manuscript as text B, pp. 210-12, and the *adlocutio* and *ordo* from Sirmond's edition as text F, pp. 223-5.

⁵⁹ J.L. Nelson, 'The Earliest Surviving Royal *Ordo*: Some Liturgical and Historical Aspects', in Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp. 341-60, esp. pp. 343-9; Nelson, 'Rites', pp. 306-8.

⁶⁰ Jackson, 'Hincmar's Ordines', pp. 35-6n.22, 48-50, demonstrates that Hincmar used the Gregorian sacramentary, though almost every prayer derived from marriage liturgy could also be found in Gelasian sacramentaries.

⁶¹ 'Fac illam tamen sobolem generare, quae ad paradisi tui pertineat haereditatem', *Ordo of Ermentrude* 4, ed. Jackson, p. 85; cf. *Ordo of Judith* 6, ed. Jackson, *Ordines*, p. 77.

⁶² 'Sit foecunda in tibi placita sobole', *Ordo of Ermentrude* 4, ed. Jackson, p. 85; cf. Sacramentary of Marmoutier, no. 838, ed. J. Décréaux, *Le sacramentaire de Marmoutier (Autun 19 bis) dans l'histoire des sacramentaires carolingiens du IX^e siècle*, 2 vols (Rome, 1985), II, p. 445.

⁶³ 'consenescatis pariter in senectute bona, et videatis filios filiorum vestrorum florentes in voluntate Domini', *Ordo of Ermentrude* 6, ed. Jackson, p. 86; cf. Sacramentary of Marmoutier, no. 838, ed. Décréaux, II, p. 446.

⁶⁴ 'imitatrixque sanctarum...feminarum', *Ordo of Ermentrude* 4, ed. Jackson, p. 85; cf. Sacramentary of Marmoutier, no. 838, ed. Décréaux, II, p. 445.

⁶⁵ Nelson, 'Rites', p. 308; Smith, 'Queen-making Rites', pp. 25-6; MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, p. 12.

⁶⁶ 'corona iustitiae...fructibus sanctis, et operibus benedictis', *Ordo of Ermentrude* 4, ed. Jackson, p. 85.

⁶⁷ 'nec...petitiones negligere, maxime si ipsas petitiones evidentibus indiciis ex dei viderimus inspiratione conceptas', Council of Soissons (text B), ed. Hartmann, p. 212, ll.24-6. Nelson, 'Rites', pp. 301-2, suggests the anonymous second bishop was Hincmar.

⁶⁸ ‘ut non vobis sit mirum, quare hoc petat’, Council of Soissons (text B), ed. Hartmann, p. 211, ll.34-5. R.-H. Bautier, ‘Sacres et couronnements sous les Carolingiens et les premiers Capétiens: Recherches sur la genèse du sacre royal français’, in R.H. Bautier, *Recherches sur l’histoire de la France médiévale: Des Mérovingiens aux premiers Capétiens* (Aldershot, 1991), II, pp. 7-56, at p. 37, and Nelson, ‘Rites’, p. 302, note the performance seems to have required some explaining.

⁶⁹ ‘de fructu ventris sui oblationem deo’, Council of Soissons (text B), ed. Hartmann, pp. 211-12, ll.41, 1.

⁷⁰ de Jong, *In Samuel’s Image*, pp. 102-3, 113, 163, 170, 264.

⁷¹ The reference to multiple deaths is another reason against identifying Drogo and Pippin as Richildis’s sons; see n.28 above. Otherwise, Lothar is the only son known to have died before August 866.

⁷² ‘aliquibus...quod vos non latet, suo iudicio talem passionem permisit incurrere’, Council of Soissons (text B), ed. Hartmann, p. 212, ll.2-3. An alternative reading is God had allowed other sons to bring about such suffering, in other words a reference to filial rebellions; cf. Jackson, *Ordines*, p. 83n.9.

⁷³ ‘benedictionem episcopalem super uxorem suam venire, ut talem sobolem ei dominus de illa dignetur donare, unde sancta ecclesia solatium et regnum necessariam defensionem...cum illis, quos adhuc habet...possit habere’, Council of Soissons (text B), ed. Hartmann, p. 212, ll.4-8. *Pace* Smith, ‘Queen-making Rites’, p. 31, the church’s relief and kingdom’s defence referred to the future *sobolis* rather than Ermentrude.

⁷⁴ Genesis XVII.17.

⁷⁵ Genesis XXV.21.

⁷⁶ Genesis III.16.

⁷⁷ I Peter III.6.

⁷⁸ Genesis XXI.12.

⁷⁹ ‘Et de hoc in sanctis scripturis habemus auctoritatem, quia, sicut dominus ad Abraham dixit: In semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes, cui iam centenario de nonagenaria uxore Isaac filium dedit, ita et ipsum Isaac uxorem sterilem accipere fecit, ut et in hoc, sicut in multis solet facere, misericordie suae largitatem ostenderet.

Et inde dicit scriptura, quia deprecatus est Isaac dominum pro uxore sua, eo quod esset sterilis, et concepit. Et non sit vobis mirum, cur antea hoc non fecit; quia, sicut sacra scriptura dicit, in primordio coniunctionis masculi et femine dixit dominus ad Evam: Ad virum tuum erit conversio tua, et ipse dominabitur tui. Et cum iam essent moribus in legitima coniunctione maturi et propectae aetatis Abraham et Sarra et, ut sanctus Petrus dicit: Sarra oboediebat Abrahae dominum eum vocans, dixit dominus ad Abraham, quod antea nec ipsi nec alio homini legimus illum dixisse: Omnia, quae dixerit tibi Sarra audi vocem eius. Iam enim et Abraham presbyter merito vocabatur, et defecerunt muliebria, id est omnis lascivietas, Sarrae. Et tunc acceperunt benedictionem seminis benedicti a domino, in quo benedicuntur omnes gentes. Amen', Council of Soissons (text B), ed. Hartmann, p. 212, ll.8-22.

⁸⁰ J.J. Contreni, 'Carolingian Biblical Culture', in G. van Riel, C. Steel and J.J. McEvoy (eds), *Iohannes Scottus Eriugena: The Bible and Hermeneutics* (Leuven, 1996), pp. 1-23; C. Chazelle and B. van Name Edwards, 'Introduction: The Study of the Bible and Carolingian Culture', in C. Chazelle and B. van Name Edwards (eds) *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 1-16.

⁸¹ See, for example, J.J. Contreni, 'By Lions, Bishops are Meant – by Wolves, Priests: History, Exegesis, and the Carolingian Church in Haimo of Auxerre's Commentary on Ezechiel', *Francia* 29.1 (2002), pp. 29-56; L. Coon, 'What is the Word if not Semen?' Priestly Bodies in Carolingian Exegesis', in Brubaker and Smith, *Gender in the Early Medieval World*, pp. 278-300; S. Shimahara, 'Exégèse et politique dans l'oeuvre d'Haymon d'Auxerre', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 225.4 (2008), pp. 471-86.

⁸² M. de Jong, 'The Empire as Ecclesia: Hrabanus Maurus and Biblical Historia for Rulers', in Y. Hen and M. Innes (eds), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 191-226; M. de Jong, 'Exegesis for an Empress', in E. Cohen and M. de Jong (eds), *Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power and Gifts in Context* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 69-100; J. Nelson, 'Lay Readers of the Bible in the Carolingian Ninth Century', in J. Nelson and D. Kempf (eds), *Reading the Bible in the Middle Ages* (London, 2015), pp. 43-55.

⁸³ M. de Jong, 'Carolingian Political Discourse and the Biblical Past: Hraban, Dhuoda, Radbert', in C. Gantner, R. McKitterick and S. Meeder (eds), *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 87-102, esp. pp. 88-91.

⁸⁴ Carolingian Genesis commentaries emphasized this: Wigbod, *Quaestionum super Genesim*, PL 93, cols. 324D-325A; Hrabanus Maurus, *Commentarius in Genesim* 3.9, PL 107, col. 581A-B; Remigius of Auxerre, *Expositio super Genesim*, ed. B. van Name Edwards, CCCM 136 (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 145-6.

⁸⁵ Another noticeable theme in commentaries: Alcuin, *Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesim* 174, PL 100, col. 539C-D; Angelomus of Luxeuil, *Commentarius in Genesim*, PL 115, col. 181A-B.

⁸⁶ Cf. Sacramentary of Echternach 3.68, ed. Y. Hen, *The Sacramentary of Echternach* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. lat. 9433) (London, 1997), pp. 379-82.

⁸⁷ *Codex Carolinus*, no. 11, ed. W. Gundlach, *MGH Epp.* 3 (Berlin, 1892), p. 505; though see M. Garrison, 'The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne', in Hen and Innes, *Uses of the Past*, pp. 114-61, at pp. 123-9, on other prominent themes within the collection. A comparable idea is expressed in the problematic *Clausula de unctione Pippini*, ed. A.J. Stoclet, 'La Clausula de unctione Pippini: Mises au point et nouvelles hypothèses', *Francia* 8 (1980), pp. 1-42, at p. 3, ll.21-2, with R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 137-41, on its likely ninth-century dating.

⁸⁸ See D. Alibert, 'Semen eius in aeternum manebit...Remarques sur l'engendrement royal à l'époque carolingienne', in M. Rouche (ed.), *Mariage et sexualité au Moyen Âge: Accord ou crise?* (Paris, 2000), pp. 135-45, at p. 137, on Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. bibl. fol. 23, fol. 104r.

⁸⁹ 'ex utero fidelis amici tui patriarchae nostri Abrahae, preeligisti regis [sic] saeculis profuturos', Ordo II.2 (Sacramentary of Angoulême), and see too Ordo I.2 (Sacramentary of Gellone), Ordo IV.4 (Benedictional of Freising), and Ordo IX A.5 (Sacramentary of St-Thierry, possibly associated with Louis the Stammerer's coronation in 878), ed. Jackson, *Ordines*, pp. 59, 53, 71, 127; cf. J.L. Nelson, 'The Settings of the Gift in the Reign of Charlemagne', in W. Davies and P. Fouracre (eds), *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 116-48, at pp. 123-4n.23.

⁹⁰ 'Conferat Omnipotens, auxit qui semen Habrahae, / Ut videas natos, unde voceris avus; / Dedat progeniem, duplicet triplicetque nepotes, / Semine ut e vestro crescat opima seges, / Quique regant Francos nec non Romamque potentem', Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Ludowici pii*, ll.1092-6, ed. E. Faral, *Ermold le Noir: Poème sur Louis le Pieux et épîtres au Roi Pépin* (Paris, 1932), pp. 84-6.

⁹¹ Alibert, 'Semen', pp. 138-9.

⁹² Ermoldus, *In honorem Hludowici pii*, ll.2086, 2300-1, ed. Faral, pp. 160, 176.

⁹³ 'Abrahae veluti generosa stirpe creatis / Ornent polos nepotibus', *De rectoribus Christianis*, c.5, ed. Dyson, p. 82 (my translation).

⁹⁴ 'Splendida progenies Karoli de semine magni', *Carm.* 28.53-8 (quotation at l.51), 12.43-8, ed. I. Meyers, *Sedulii Scotti Carmina*, CCCM 117 (Turnhout, 1991), pp. 52, 29.

⁹⁵ 'Hic nouus est Karolus Karoli de semine magni', *Carm.* 22.5, ed. Meyers, p. 44.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Carm.* 20, 21a-21b, 22, 23, 24, 77, ed. Meyers, pp. 39-47, 121.

⁹⁷ Nelson, 'Rites', p. 308.

⁹⁸ Genesis XLIX.25.

⁹⁹ 'Reple eam benedictionibus uberum et vulvae. Benedictiones patrum antiquorum confortatae sint super eam, et super semen eius, sicut promisisti servo tuo Abrahae, et semini eius in saecula', *Ordo of Judith* 11, ed. Jackson, p. 79.

¹⁰⁰ 'Deus enim, ut credimus, elegit et praelegit in regno, dans illis gloriam ad illam tendentem, conformem similitudinis magnae, quam pollicitus est Abraam, Ysach et Iacob, prolisque dignis et semini eorum', Dhuoda, *Liber manualis* 3.8, ed. and trans. M. Thiébaux, *Dhuoda, Handbook for her Warrior Son: Liber Manualis* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 106-7 (translation adapted).

¹⁰¹ 'meritis et nomine atque virtute regina...honore et gloria coronata a dextris regis', *Ordo of Ermentrude* 4, ed. Jackson, p. 85.

¹⁰² J.L. Nelson, 'Inauguration Rituals', in Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp. 283-307, at p. 283.

¹⁰³ MacLean, *Ottoman Queenship*, pp. 184-97, argues persuasively that the *Ordo III*'s pronounced emphasis specifically on *queenly* fertility is one of several reasons for regarding it as an 'improvised piece of political liturgy' (p. 197) associated with the inauguration of the childless Cunigunde in 1002.

¹⁰⁴ Garver, *Women*, p. 218.

¹⁰⁵ Hen, *Royal Patronage*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁶ ‘ortum prolis nostrae, si a fecunda virgine impetrando data fuerit, sub continua oration[um] missarumque assiduitate’, *Recueil des chartes de Charles le Chauve*, vol. 1, ed. G. Tessier (Paris, 1943), no. 364, p. 315.

¹⁰⁷ *Capitulare Carisiacense*, c.13, ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, *MGH Capit.* 2 (Hanover, 1897), no. 281, p. 359.

¹⁰⁸ Nelson, ‘Bertrada’, p. 95.

¹⁰⁹ MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, p. 13.

¹¹⁰ Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 210.

¹¹¹ Smith, ‘Queen-making Rites’, p. 32.